

July 26, 2006
SCMS Pedagogy Award Committee

Dear Award Committee:

I am very happy to support Dr. Chuck Kleinhans for the SCMS Pedagogy award. I have had the pleasure of working in the same department with Chuck since the fall of 2002, when I first joined the faculty at Northwestern. Of course, I had known of Chuck's many contributions to the field for many years before that, but my greatest knowledge of his teaching excellence come from working with him closely over the past few years.

Chuck is a true leader in the field, having had a remarkable and invaluable influence on the growth of film and cultural studies as an academic discipline. It was obvious to me when I began working at Northwestern that his leadership had catapulted the intellectual careers of graduate students at Northwestern for many years. Under his academic guidance (as both graduates and undergraduates), many of our students have gone on to produce important books and work at some of the best film departments (including Duke, NYU, UC Berkeley, UCLA, and more).

Among Chuck's many strengths as a teacher and academic advisor, several stand out. First, I have been extremely impressed by his dedication to students and the enormous amount of guidance he gives them. In addition to teaching, he conducts extremely valuable mentorship graduate workshops on fellowships, dissertation writing, and conference presentations, and he also organizes film events on campus. These activities provide students with excellent opportunities for professional training and are enormously helpful in steering them toward successful progress.

In addition, Chuck teaches an enormous range of courses, and apparently with great success. His classes include graduate seminars on topics such as Textual Analysis, Cultural Theory, Film Theory, and Visual Culture as well as upper level seminars on Experimental Film and Video, Film Noir, Hong Kong cinema, and Documentary—and these are courses he has taught only over the past four years. He is not only an extremely versatile and broadly knowledgeable scholar, his curiosity for new areas of research and his willingness to take on new challenges are truly rare.

Finally, Chuck is a very compassionate teacher who seems always willing to go the extra mile to assist students with projects and to ensure their progress. He is able to give students clear and frank criticism, while still encouraging them to be creative and curious about their scholarship. His ability to provide constructive criticism in supportive ways is also a rare talent.

Chuck's students obviously adore him. His teaching evaluations contain glowing feedback from majors, non-majors, and graduate students alike. Students in his recent Experimental Film class said:

- This was a great course, and as a non-RTVF major, I got a lot out of it.
- This class is amazing. You get to see films you never get to see anywhere else because they aren't available on video.

The other courses have similar responses:

- Kleinhans is a great professor - a fun course that gives you freedom to study the aspects you are interested in whilst allowing you to get a general overview of the themes.
- I fell in love with HK Cinema because of this course, or at least aspects of it.
- Great class. Great lectures and great film selections.
- Take this class--it's a find! Lots of freedom to do what you want.
- Exposure to a lot of great experimental works. Prof is great.
- Superlative overview of methods of media analysis. Chuck is highly knowledgeable and the readings were enlightening.
- This class is a superb way to start thinking about issues of contemporary US documentary, and the role of TV in this.

Not only are Chuck's classes popular, he is a demanding teacher whose syllabi always combine a dazzling set of screenings with a fully researched and up-to-date sampling of the literature in the field. As is typical, the best students gravitate to the best courses, and this is certainly the case with Chuck's classes.

When I learned that Chuck planned to retire over the next few years, I knew that our students would lose an invaluable resource and beloved professor. We are all very happy that he decided to do this slowly so that our students may benefit from his presence until the end of the decade. Even while I have been at Northwestern for a relatively short amount of time, I realize how important he was in shaping the excellence of the film department here and giving us all a bright future. I believe that Chuck is one of the most deserving people in the field for this SCMS award. With his lifetime commitment to students and his pioneering journal *Jump Cut*, he is a model of collective scholarship, first-rate teaching, and brilliant leadership for so many people in the field. It seems to me that he would indeed be the perfect person to honor this year. Granting this award to Prof. Kleinhans would not only recognize his many years of commitment to students but also reflect on the excellence of SCMS itself.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Lynn Spigel
Francis Willard University Professor and Chair, RTF